REMARKS

The Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection. Claims 2, 8-9, and 12 are now pending.

Claims 2 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite with respect to the term reversed in each claim. These claims have been amended to clarify the expression intended by the Applicants.

Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hojo, U.S. 6,744,762 (Hojo). The Applicants traverse as follows. In rejecting Claim 9, the Examiner asserts that Fig. 1 of Hojo shows the same packet forwarding units at the combination of header converters 171-178, separation/insertion units 101/108, and buffers 111-118. However, Fig. 1 of Hojo shows eight separation/insertion units that each perform separation of a packet input from a line (e.g., 121) to a terminal (e.g. 151) if the packet is destined for the terminal. Each of Hojo's separation/insertion units distributes packets not to a plurality of packet forwarding units, but to either one terminal or one buffer.

Further, Hojo's terminal or buffer is not a plurality of packet forwarding units that perform a packet forwarding process. Because Hojo's device does not have a packet

distribution unit for distributing input packets supplied from an interface of a router into the packet forwarding units in order or into empty ones of the packet forwarding units which do not now perform processing, Hojo's device also does not have a packet rearrangement unit for performing the arrangement of packets in inputting order of the packets which are subjected to a packet forwarding process by the packet forwarding units. Rather, Hojo rearranges packets by adding sequential numbers to return the packets which were sent to one terminal back to the original packet stream.

Moreover, in Hojo, where packets are distributed to buffers, they are passed without performing a particular processing (i.e., without performing parallel processing). Thus, there is no technical concept of increasing the processing speed in Hojo; Hojo's purpose for adding sequential numbers, as noted, is to insert packets into a packet stream on a transmission line, serially. This contrasts with the addition of sequential numbers in the present invention so that the packet distribution unit can distribute packets to a plurality of packet forwarding units to process the packets in parallel.

Claims 2 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hojo in view of Takada, U.S.

4,878,218. Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hojo. Hojo has been distinguished above, taken individually.

By the addition of Takada, the person of ordinary skill, at most, learns to provide Hojo with a packet controller provided for each of plural mutiplexed channels to distribute packets. However, unlike the present invention which is directed to parallelization of packets in the network routing apparatus, both Hojo and Takada are directed to multi-channel configurations on a ring line, and not within the apparatus.

Addressing the Examiner's point that Takada teaches forwarding packets that are not arranged in reverse order where the packets are not rearranged by a packet rearrangement unit, the Applicants note that Takada does not teach forwarding packets that are not arranged in reverse order where the packets are not rearranged by the packet rearrangement unit. Takada does not mention whether the packets arrive at a forwarding address in reverse order because, according to Takada, the packets are distributed to channels positively. Therefore, there is no need for Takada to give any assurance that the packets are not arranged in reverse order. Further, Takada teaches (Column 7, lines 5-7) that no rearrangement is performed for remaining packets

already stored in the transmission buffer. By this description, Takada indicates that the packets already stored in the transmission buffer are then output to the transmission line through the transceiver controller. At most, the description merely implies that rearrangement of the packets is not performed at this time.

Rather, Takada's rearrangement is performed during the time from which the packets are taken out of the queue buffer to which they are stacked on the transmission buffer. Takada's rearrangement is performed to rearrange the packets in a priority order, and not to reorder the reverse-ordered packets in a received order. Thus, Takada does not meet the claimed limitation "wherein said packet distributing unit determines one of said packet forwarding units for distributing a packet... so that a series of packets... are not arranged in reverse order of their input order even in a case where said packets are not rearranged by said packet rearrangement unit" (Claim 2; Claim 8 can be argued similarly).

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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